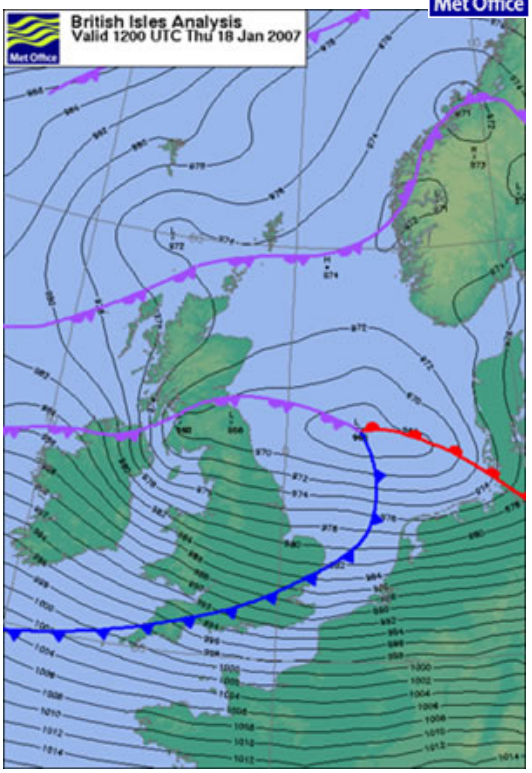
News release

18 January 2007

Met Office statement on severe weather

- The storm currently affecting the UK was centred over the North Sea at midday, developing further as it heads east towards mainland Europe.
- The strongest winds have been affecting all of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with widespread gusts of 70-80 m.p.h. being reported.
- The winds are expected to ease fairly quickly this evening. After 6 p.m., all areas will see the winds decreasing.
- Denmark, The Netherlands and Germany are expected to be more severely affected by the storm.
- Although data are still being collated, the last time such high wind speeds were experienced across such a large area of the UK was the Burns' Day storm on 25 January 1990.
- Heathrow Airport has today experienced gusts of 77 m.p.h., the highest ever recorded at this location was 87 m.p.h. on 25 January 1990.
- The Needles, on the Isle of Wight, has recorded the highest wind speed at 99 m.p.h., but this has yet to verified.
- The wind speeds currently affecting large parts of the country would be described as *severe gale force* on the Beaufort scale.
- The Met Office issued an official early warning of this event on Monday 15 January and has been working with authorities to help the country prepare for the event. Efforts are still continuing and we are working with the national weather services of our European neighbours. They are also warning their citizens of the approaching severe weather.
- The position of the storm at midday today is shown on the chart opposite.



Surface pressure chart at 1200 GMT on 18 January

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